



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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Orange County man charged with posting sexually explicit images of an underage boy on adult escort website

SANTA ANA, Calif. - An Orange, California man faces up to 20 years in federal prison after agreeing to plead guilty to transportation of child pornography, admitting that he took sexually explicit images of what he believed was a 16-year-old boy and posted them on an Internet site called rentboy.com.

In documents filed yesterday in United States District Court in Santa Ana, Joseph Stoterau, 27, agreed to plead guilty to the federal child pornography charge. Stoterau is scheduled to appear in court Monday morning to have his case assigned to a judge who will take the guilty plea.

On August 4, 2006, investigators from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Orange Police Department served a federal search warrant at Stoterau's residence. During the search, investigators seized computer equipment and a digital camera. An analysis of computer hard drives seized by investigators revealed sexually explicit images of the youth, who was actually younger than 16 at the time.

In a plea agreement filed yesterday, Stoterau admitted that he took digital pictures of the teenage victim in July and transmitted the images to rentboy.com. According to documents previously filed in this case, Stoterau claimed on the website that the teenager was 18 years old and that he was paid to have sex with men who saw the images on rentboy.com

Stoterau was arrested by the Orange Police Department on state charges prior to the execution of the federal search warrant. He also faces two counts of pandering, one count of oral copulation, and one count of contributing to the delinquency of a minor that have been filed by the Orange County District Attorney's Office.

"The cooperation seen in this case between federal and local law enforcement is a key component of the Justice Department's Project Safe Childhood," said United States Attorney Debra Wong Yang. "Exploited children deserve nothing less than every resource available to government to punish those who violate them and to help the victims rebuild their lives."

“Those who engage in the exploitation of children should no longer expect the anonymity of cyberspace to protect them,” said Robert Schoch, special agent in charge for the ICE office of investigations in Los Angeles. “ICE will continue to work closely with its local law enforcement partners to protect the young people in this community from those who attempt to sexually exploit them.”

The charge of transportation of child pornography carries a statutory maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison, as well as a fine of up to \$250,000.

The charges against Stoterau are part of Operation Predator, an ongoing ICE initiative to identify, investigate, and arrest those who prey on children. Additional information about Operation Predator is available on the Web at www.ice.gov. ICE encourages the reporting of suspected child predators through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE, which is staffed around the clock by investigators. Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.